

REPRESENTATIVE DRIEHAUS PUSHES FOR FAIRNESS IN FLOOD MAPPING

Driehaus Provision Would Support Homeowners Incorrectly Placed in Flood Zone

WASHINGTON, DC—Representative Steve Driehaus today spoke on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives in support of a measure he introduced that would reimburse property owners and communities for associated costs if they successfully petition for the exclusion of their properties from a flood zone. Rep. Driehaus's measure was adopted by voice vote as an amendment to the Flood Insurance Reform Priorities Act.

A transcript of Rep. Driehaus's remarks follows.

"Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you and I want to thank the chairman of the committee, Ms. Waters for her tremendous work on this legislation. Also, the co-sponsors of this amendment, Mr. Welch and Mr. Hinchey.

"This amendment is pretty straightforward. It would authorize the administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to reimburse property owners, or an entity or jurisdiction acting on their behalf, for any expenses that they incurred in order to file a letter of map amendment if they ultimately are successful in petitioning the exclusion of their property from a flood zone between Fiscal Year 2007 and the present, or in the future.

"The problem is this, Mr. Chairman: we have thousands of property owners who are challenging these maps as FEMA has currently drawn them. They find out about them after the maps have been drawn, after the maps are official. They then want to challenge that designation. They hire the surveyors; they hire the engineers; they go ahead and incur that

cost. And in many cases, when we find out that in fact the property owner was correct and they should not have been included in that designation to begin with, they're excluded, yet they have incurred the cost.

"This amendment simply says that if that's the case and we find that the property owner is correct, or if we find that the municipality or jurisdiction is correct in challenging the map, that they will be reimbursed by FEMA.

"CBO has scored this and has said that it will be negligible in terms of costs, yet it would relieve thousands of homeowners from the burden that they currently see in terms of incurring these costs.

"Just a little background: under current law, FEMA is authorized to reimburse property owners, lessees, and communities for engineering and surveying expenses that they incur for petitioning the inclusion of the property in a flood zone, prior to the enactment of a new flood map. But this doesn't serve the folks that we're talking about.

"I've got a community, Harrison, Ohio, where over 370 households have been included in the flood map. Now, they didn't start the process of challenging the map until after the map was already official. So, they are well beyond the time period that FEMA currently allows for that amendment to take place.

"This would address what is currently wrong in that situation, and that is, it would allow the homeowners to be reimbursed for their expenses."

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